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Written on APRIL 11, 2012 AT 10:32 AM by JWICK

“Sexual assault has no place within Navy Medicine”

Filed under FLEET AND THE FLEET MARINE FORCE, FORCE HEALTH AND SAFETY, LEADERSHIP

[NO COMMENTS]



By [Vice Adm. Matthew Nathan](#), U.S. Navy Surgeon General

Recently [Navy Medicine](#) became a key partner in supporting the new “21st Century Sailor and Marine” initiative that the [Secretary of the Navy](#) announced last month. This initiative lays out a set of objectives, programs and policies across a spectrum of wellness that maximizes the personal readiness of Sailors, Marines and their families.

As we mark April as [National Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#) (SAAM), Navy Medicine will focus its efforts on awareness and prevention of sexual violence through command-level educational efforts and special events.

We have to acknowledge that sexual assault is an attack on our shipmates. I am concerned to hear statistics that show these attacks take place every day and we must work tirelessly to prevent these crimes from occurring in our ranks. Sexual Assaults are a direct affront to good order and discipline and affects unit readiness.

I expect you to do everything you can to exert intrusive leadership and stamp out anything that may foster conditions where sexual assaults could occur. We must examine our use of humor and language in the work place and see if it is appropriate or whether it promotes a negative environment. We need to prevent the abuse of alcohol which is a contributing factor in sexual assaults. According to FY-10 reports, alcohol is involved in 46 percent of these events.

I also expect Navy Medicine to engage at every level. If you witness a shipmate threatening another shipmate, say something. We must create safe environments free from sexual assault and harassment. We will have a stronger Navy Medicine enterprise if we make this our aim.

While we work to eliminate this crime from our service, we must continue to plan to care for the victims when these unfortunate incidents do occur. It is crucial we support the sexual assault victim and hold offenders accountable.

The Department of Defense’s SAAM theme this year is, “Hurts One, Affects All. Prevention of Sexual Assault is Everyone’s Duty.” In addition to this overarching theme, Navy Medicine will highlight complementary weekly themes throughout the month:

Navy Medicine Video

Navy Medicine is a global healthcare network of 63,000 Navy medical personnel around the world who provide high quality health care to more than one million eligible beneficiaries. Navy Medicine personnel deploy with Sailors and Marines worldwide, providing critical mission support aboard ship, in the air, under the sea and on the battlefield.

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- April 1-7: Hurts One. Sexual assault victims are our Shipmates.
- April 8-14: Affects All. Sexual assault impacts readiness and combat effectiveness.
- April 15-21: Prevention is Everyone’s Duty. We must look out for our Shipmates and prevent harm.
- April 22-30: We Will Not Tolerate Sexual Assault. Sexual assault is my problem, your problem, our problem.

Sexual assault has no place within Navy Medicine and I know we can resolve this with your efforts and focus. Thank you for suiting up every day. I am so proud to be part of your team and it is my honor to serve with you. I look forward to seeing you around the Fleet.

Editor’s Note:

Know Your Rights: For more information or assistance please go to the Department of Defense’s website for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office by clicking [here](#) and/or through [MyDuty.mil](#).



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